## REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 18-31 are pending. By this Amendment, the specification and claims 2, 3, 13, 19, 20 and 30 have been amended and withdrawn claim 17 has been canceled.

An Election of Species was required in this application and Applicant elected Species I. Claims 1-16 and 18-31 read on the elected species. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application based on non-elected claim 17.

The drawings were objected to based on an informality. By this Amendment, the specification has been amended responsive to the objection. It is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

The specification was objected to based on various informalities. By this Amendment, claims 2, 3, 13, 19, 20 and 30 have been amended responsive to the objection. It is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-16 and 18-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yoshimura et al. (Yoshimura), U.S. Patent No. 6,439,684, in view of Kato et al. (Kato), U.S. Patent No. 6,450,606. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yoshimura and Kato fail to disclose an image forming apparatus having an input unit that inputs a result of a visual comparison between a test pattern image and a plurality of sample images prepared based on a change in a transfer condition of a transfer unit and a correction unit that corrects the transfer condition of the transfer unit based on the comparison result received via the input unit, as recited in claim 1, or the corresponding steps of claim 18.

Yoshimura discloses an adjustment method where a predetermined test pattern is recorded on a sheet S (Figs. 3A and 3B). The test pattern includes a first test pattern P1 and a second test pattern P2. The first test pattern P1 is formed of a plurality of patterns Pa that are recorded at a constant distance a and at a prescribed width b in the main scanning direction (col. 6, lines 44-48). The second test pattern P2 is also formed with patterns at the same

distance a and width b as the first test pattern P1. However, each pattern Pb-n to Pb+n of the second test pattern P2 is offset from the patterns Pa of the first test pattern P1 (col. 7, lines 3-5). The patterns Pb-n to Pb+n of the second test pattern P2 are recorded such that one pattern Pb-n to Pb+n overlaps adjacent patterns Pa of the first test pattern P1 (Fig. 3B). The operator can determine an offset based on the pattern Pb-n to Pb+n that overlaps adjacent patterns Pa (col. 7, lines 38-44). For example, if pattern Pb-2 of the second test pattern P2 overlaps adjacent patterns Pa of the first test pattern P1, the number of the pattern Pb-2 is input to a controller (col. 11, lines 5-11).

Accordingly, Yoshimura fails to provide any disclosure or suggestion with regard to using sample images or correcting the transfer condition of a transfer unit based a comparison between a test pattern image and a sample image. In Yoshimura, an operator only inspects the test pattern image to determine which pattern Pb-n to Pb+n of the second test pattern P2 overlaps adjacent patterns Pa of the first test pattern P1. There is no disclosure or suggestion with regard to using sample images in Yoshimura or how sample images could be used with the test pattern image of Yoshimura. Yoshimura limits their inspection to patterns Pa, Pb of test patterns P1, P2.

Kato discloses a test pattern printing method, wherein after a test pattern has been printed and a patch with a test area having a color closest to the achromatic color in the reference area of the patch has been selected by the user, input processing for the selected patch number is performed. That is, the patch number entered by the user through an UI is stored in a predetermined memory location (col. 10, lines 1-8).

Kato is thus only concerned about correcting a deviation in the colors of a printing apparatus (col. 6, lines 42-51). Kato fails to provide any disclosure or suggestion with regard to correcting a transfer condition of a transfer unit (that transfers a recording material) based on the comparison result received via an input unit. Furthermore, Kato fails to provide any

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disclosure or suggestion as to how the testing of color patterns can be incorporated into Yoshimura (which fails to use sample images). Contrary to the assertions in the Office Action, a sample image is not the same as a plurality of sample images.
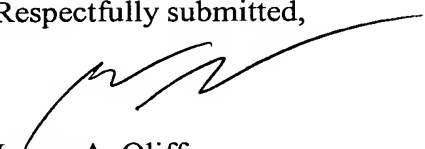
In addition, the user cannot obtain a comparison result that can be used for correction even if the sample patterns of Kato are combined with Yoshimura. The sample patterns of Kato are portions that read as ( 0, 0, 0, 150) at the lower part of each pattern in Fig. 7. A plurality of sample patterns appear in Kato's Fig. 7, but they are substantially all black. Accordingly, the comparison result to be used for correction cannot be obtained from the identical sample patterns of Kato.

In view of the foregoing, Yoshimura and Kato fail to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in claims 1 and 18 as well as the additional features recited in their dependent claims. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-16 and 18-31 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAO:SMS/sxb

Attachment:
  Petition for Extension of Time

Date:  January 20, 2006

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